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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4127

INFO RUEHDL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNRAO/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHMFIASS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFIASS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RHMFIASS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY

RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002624

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DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: GOVERNMENT PURSUES DIPLOMACY; CONTINUES  
EFFORTS TO CALM A TENSE PUBLIC

REF: A. ANKARA 2620

[¶](#)B. ANKARA 2618 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: While FM Babacan pursued talks with senior Iraqi leaders in Baghdad October 23, the GOT continued its effort to calm domestic fury in the wake of October 21 terrorist attacks. Government officials implemented a little used law to muzzle radio and television broadcasts related to the attacks. Most broadcast outlets have ignored the ban so far. Political opposition leaders continue to press the PM Erdogan's government to authorize the military to retaliate against PKK targets inside Iraq. Meanwhile, acts of public outrage continue to sweep the country (septel). Military operations aimed at recovering the eight soldiers who were taken hostage by the PKK reportedly continue on both sides of the Turkey-Iraq border. END SUMMARY

Diplomacy Remains GOT's First Priority

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¶2. (C) FM Babacan continued to pursue diplomatic means to address the PKK issue, in line with the GOT policy to do so until all such options are exhausted. Babacan traveled to Baghdad October 23 for a one-day visit, the first ministerial-level visit by a GOT official since the war began in 2003. Babacan met with Iraqi President Talabani, Prime Minister Maliki, and FM Zebari. He was also scheduled to meet with both vice presidents. GOT Iraq Coordinator Celikkol will provide a read-out to Ambassador late October ¶24.

¶3. (U) According to press accounts, Babacan reiterated six demands of Iraq with regard to the PKK:

- Prevent the use of Iraqi territory by PKK terrorists;
- Halt logistical support from reaching PKK encampments;
- Extradite PKK leaders to Turkey;

- Shut down PKK camps in Iraq;
- Limit the PKK's freedom of movement; and
- Prevent PKK terrorist actions.

**¶4.** (U) Iraqi officials reportedly responded with strong statements condemning the PKK and its continued terrorist activities. President Talabani said the GOI has presented the PKK with two options: 1) lay down arms, or 2) leave Iraqi territory. PM Maliki has reportedly ordered that all PKK offices throughout Iraq be closed (something he has previously ordered) and called on PKK camps and activities also to be shut down as well. During a joint press conference with Babacan, FM Zebari pointed to ongoing IZ-TU counter terrorism efforts and said the GOI does not want the stability of northern Iraq undermined.

**¶5.** (U) In the midst of a visit to London, PM Erdogan indicated that Turkey is considering an economic embargo, should Iraqi authorities not move immediately to end the PKK's presence inside Iraq. Erdogan noted that Turkey plays a crucial role in supplying Iraq with electricity, water, and food and that the GOT could consider "imposing sanctions on some of our export items."

**¶6.** (U) Deputy PM and government spokesman Cemil Cicek said in parliament October 23 that the timing of a possible cross border operation (CBO) into Iraq would depend upon military planners and what makes most sense from a military standpoint, should diplomacy fail. He underscored, however, that political responsibility for such a decision resides with the government and that the matter will be discussed during a National Security Council meeting that President Gul will chair the afternoon of October 24. He warned the Turkish public against provoking violence and engaging in

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ethnic-based attacks in reaction to the terrorist strike.

Political Opposition Presses for Military Response

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**¶7.** (U) While the government pursues a diplomatic track, political opposition leaders continue to press for a military response. Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal said the GOT should use the CBO motion passed by parliament last week "as soon as possible." He criticized PM Erdogan for not telling Secretary Rice, "We have been giving you time for the last four years." Baykal added that Iraq should know that "it should either be a neighbor to Turkey, or a target of it." CHP Deputy leader Onur Oymen accused unnamed entities of providing support to the PKK and criticized the government for failing to have given a green light to a CBO in response to the terrorist attacks.

**¶8.** (U) Nationalist Action Party (MHP) deputy group chairman Mehmet Sandir went the furthest when he told parliamentarians that the PKK has declared war against Turkey and alleged that the PKK "is no longer administered by the murderer in Imrali (former PKK head Abdullah Ocalan, imprisoned on Imrali island) but by (KRG President) Barzani." Sandir added that the government has abrogated its duty to protect the nation and said "the GOT is responsible for the bloodshed."

Government Seeks to Dampen Public Outrage

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**¶9.** (C) Meanwhile, government officials continue to seek ways to defuse an increasingly dangerous domestic situation. In reaction to continued sensationalized coverage of the terrorist attacks, hostage-taking, and subsequent funerals of the 12 soldiers killed, which took place on October 23, the GOT moved to implement a seldom-used law that prohibits broadcasts that "have a damaging influence on the public order and moral values of the people and that project a negative image of security forces and are detrimental to the social psychology." In implementing the law, the government

banned all coverage of the October 21 terrorist attacks in Hakkari Province. The government's motivation may, in part, be tied to the desire to continue operations in that area in search of the eight missing soldiers taken hostage by the PKK.

¶10. (SBU) To date, Turkish broadcasters have largely ignored the order, in part because they are uncertain exactly what content is not allowed. All television broadcasts covered the soldiers' funerals and related anti-terrorism protests on October 23, further exacerbating tensions. Some responsible voices from Turkey's nationalist minority have spoken out on the need to maintain national unity. Nationalist youth group "Idealist Hearth" President Harun Ozturk said his organization's members would not provoke violence, adding that if such clashes (involving ethnic Kurds as well as government supporters and opponents) become a regular occurrence, nationalists will withdraw from the streets for the good of the nation.

#### Counter Insurgency Operations Ongoing

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¶11. (C) While pressure on the government to respond militarily to the attacks increases, counter insurgency operations continue along the border between Iraq and Turkey in Hakkari Province. Press accounts claim that Deputy PM Cicek told an October 23 meeting of the AKP's Party Board that some PKK camps inside Iraq were hit by Turkish F-16s and artillery fire after the attacks, as far as 40-50 kilometers inside Iraq. As part of ongoing efforts to recover the hostages and root out terrorists responsible for the attack who fled back into Iraq, Cicek also reportedly said that Turkish army units have been chasing PKK insurgents across

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the border. We have been unable independently to verify these reports.

¶12. (SBU) According to press reports, security forces shot two PKK terrorists at a checkpoint in Malatya Province, hundreds of kilometers to the northwest of where the October 21 attacks occurred, killing one and wounding the other. The clash reportedly took place when a minibus was stopped at a road checkpoint and one insurgent exited the vehicle with a rifle. He was shot immediately by security forces while a second was wounded as he attempted to throw a hand grenade at those manning the roadblock. The other 15 passengers on the bus have been taken into custody.

#### Mission Security - Maintaining Vigilance

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¶13. (SBU) A demonstration organized by the MHP youth wing is expected to take place mid-day October 24 in front of the consulate in Istanbul. Approximately 100-150 MHP-linked youths marched along a street adjacent to the consulate there late on October 23 without incident. Harb-Is, a labor union which represents Turkish workers on military facilities, is planning to organize a protest against USG policy regarding the PKK in front of the entrance to Incirlik Air Base in the coming days. Turkish National Police continue to provide supplemental security support at all mission facilities.

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